



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

TITLE: SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

EFFECTIVE DATE: 12/4/2019

REFERENCE NUMBER: MKT004

CAPRA STANDARD(S):

NEXT REVIEW DATE: 10/2022

RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY: Director

PAGES: 1

PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this policy to provide employees guidance regarding appropriate content and use of social media with respect to the use of, but not limited to, City images, material, logos, or references to the City. The City endorses the secure use of social media to enhance communication and information sharing. Social media facilitates discussion of City issues, operations and services by providing the public with the opportunity to interact with their City government in a variety of ways. A social networking presence has become a powerful tool for vibrant and transparent communication and reaches those that may not consume traditional media as frequently as other segments of the population. This policy establishes the City's position on its management, administration, and oversight. When properly used, social media can be an effective tool for the City to:

- Openly, directly and publicly communicate with citizens
- Develop new and/or improved relationships with constituents and community partners
- Seek input from citizens on key issues or services
- Promote educational information directly to the public
- Potentially recruit employees and volunteers

This policy is not meant to address one particular form of social media, but rather social media in general, as advances in technology will occur and new tools will emerge.

DEFINITIONS

Blog: A self-published diary or commentary on a particular topic that may allow visitors to post response, reactions, or comments. The term is short for "Web log."

Confidential Information: Information sensitive to law enforcement, information which could be considered personal or private or could potentially expose the City to liability or items allowed by law to remain confidential.

Post: Content an individual shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.

Social Media: A category of Internet-based resources that integrate user-generated content and user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites (Facebook), microblogging sites (Twitter, Nixle), photo- and video-sharing sites (Flickr, YouTube), wikis (Wikipedia), blogs, and news sites (Digg, Reddit).

Social Networks: Online platforms where users can create profiles, share information, and socialize with others using a range of technologies.

Speech: Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videotape, or related forms of communication.

OFFICIAL CITY USE

- a. Where possible, each social media page should include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose and scope of the City Department presence on the website.
- b. Where possible, the page(s) should provide a link to the City Department's official website.
- c. All Department social media sites or pages shall be approved by the Department's Director and City's Public Information Officer or his/her designee, and shall include the City's Public Information Officer as an administrator.
- d. Where possible, social media pages should clearly indicate they are maintained by the City Department and should have City Department contact information prominently displayed.
- e. Department personnel representing the City and their Department via social media outlets shall:
 - (1) Conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the City and, accordingly, shall adhere to all City standards of conduct and observe conventionally accepted protocols and proper decorum.
 - (2) Identify themselves as an employee of the City.
 - (3) Not conduct political activities or private business.
 - (4) Not promote non-City organizations, individuals, private businesses or entities.
 - (5) Not make statements of personal opinion or speculation and maintain a professional tone.
- f. Social media content shall adhere to all applicable laws, regulations, and policies, including all information technology and records management policies.
- g. Where possible, social media posts should state that the opinions expressed by visitors to the page do not reflect the opinions of the City.
- h. Pages shall clearly indicate that posted comments will be monitored and that the City reserves the right to remove obscenities, off-topic comments, and personal attacks.
- i. Pages shall clearly indicate that any content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure.
- j. Employees shall observe and abide by all copyright, trademark, and service restrictions in posting materials to electronic media.
- k. Employees must obey the Terms of Service of any social media platform employed.
- l. Inappropriate usage of social media can be grounds for disciplinary action.
- m. Additional and/or special policies may apply to law enforcement and other first responder personnel.
- n. The use of City computers or other electronic devices by employees to access personal social media is limited to logging into their personal account to access administration of a City's social media outlet.

BEST PRACTICES

- a. Think twice before posting: Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Consider what might happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect on the City. If you are unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, ask your Department Director or the City's Public Information Officer.
- b. Strive for accuracy. Get the facts straight before posting them. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors.
- c. Be respectful: Understand that content contributed to a social media site could encourage comments on discussion of opposing ideas. Be aware that responses to such comments will reflect upon the City.
- d. Remember your audience: Consider before posting whether the post will alienate, harm or provoke unwanted responses.
- e. On City outlets, post daily to maintain fresh content, encourage interaction and check comments daily in order to moderate/delete/or respond to comments as outlined in the policy.
- f. Add value to the City of New Braunfels through your interaction. Provide worthwhile and timely information in a professional manner.